

# The Saturday Gazette.

BLOOMFIELD AND MONTCLAIR.

WILLIAM P. LYON, Editor and Proprietor.  
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THE  
**SATURDAY GAZETTE,**  
BLOOMFIELD AND MONTCLAIR,  
BELLEVILLE, CALDWELL AND VERONA.  
AN INDEPENDENT WEEKLY JOURNAL  
OF LITERATURE, EDUCATION, POL-  
ITICS, GENERAL NEWS, AND ES-  
PECIALLY OF LOCAL IN-  
TERESTS.

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## A Thanksgiving Story

VIXIE'S STRATAGEM.  
By H. C.—T.

PART I.

"It's all bosh, Deacon, all bosh. I've  
watched the way this thing works for so  
many years, an' seen so many cases of fol-  
lerin' one's own bent turn out miserable  
and unhappy, an' kin pint to so many who  
listened, reasonable, to a little advice from  
them as is older an' knows a thing or two,  
an' are livin' nice and comfortable like to-  
gether, that I know I'm right when I de-  
clare this idee of young folks bein' mated  
by natur', and a knowin' it at first sight,  
all down right bosh! And, Deacon, I'm  
goin' to set on my experience an' convic-  
tions, an' allow no such nonsense to make  
or break Vixie's future."

Squire Robbins emphasized this with a  
quick stride across the room, and, surely,  
his long determined upper lip, and the  
vertical height of his back-head in con-  
nection with his noted firmness, warranted  
the serious conviction of Deacon Morse,  
that, "if Squire Robbins had so ordered  
that Vix take off her hankerker after  
George Keeler an' put on a proper likin'  
for Felix Morse," it was a declaration that  
needed only a little anticipatory patience,  
on the part of a third party, to become a  
fact. Moreover, Deacon Morse, prided  
himself on being open to conviction in all  
his views, excepting certain theological  
dogmas that had been tried and accepted  
by the first-born of his ancestral line; and  
having a peculiar pride in the respected  
legacy, refused to admit himself amenable  
to the interrogation of advanced thought.  
But he saw something reasonable in Squire  
Robbins' plea, that "Our farm's layin'  
alongside one another, as if Natur' intend-  
ed them allers to stay so (I) an' I havin'  
a daughter as will make as good a wife as  
any girl in the county, for any man; an'  
you havin' a likely, stiddy, son, an' both  
on us age—in! Deacon! Why it'll  
be a comfort to both on us to see them  
united! the old hum-steeds an' livin' peace-  
ably an' happy together."

Whether or not this unconscious adop-  
tion of French marital custom could rea-  
sonably furnish extenuating precedent in  
that nation's extolled practice, I shall  
not stop to discuss; neither shall I say  
more, respecting Squire Robbins' prospects  
in his proposed coercion of Vixie to his  
innovating scheme, than that he had care-  
lessly omitted two important factors in his  
impressive equation of conviction and in-  
tention. The first factor being, that Vixie  
was the daughter of Squire Robbins him-  
self, inheriting his shrewdness and pur-  
pose, and the second factor being, that  
Vixie's mother was an "unusually smart  
woman," and had "favored" Vixie with a  
tact that Squire Robbins himself often  
confessed was a remarkable trait in his  
wife's character.

That the Squire would have adduced  
many more reasons to support his project,  
his well known powers of logical amplifi-  
cation warrant us in believing; but unfor-  
tunately for his convincing eloquence, all  
further essays in this direction were sud-  
denly put an end to by a little squeak  
from the hall-door, which he perturbedly  
hastened to resolve by throwing it open  
wide, and darting an inquisitive glance  
down the length of the passage every cor-  
ner of which was illuminated by the rays  
of the light he held above his head. But  
failing to discover any adequate cause for  
his excitement, he returned to the colloquy  
with his neighbor in which they both  
seemed to acquire a growing interest,  
though it must be confessed that Squire  
Robbins discerned cause for suspicions in  
the unexplained movement of the door.  
At the same time he felt quite vexed with  
himself for his display of undignified nerv-  
ousness.

II.

It would seem that the emoluments of life  
are fairly distributed through the success-  
ive generations by means of the withdraw-  
al of the aptitude for precipitancy, after a  
certain age has been reached.  
The successive lessons of life leave in  
their wake a constraining tendency to con-  
servatism, which sooner or later imposes  
an interval between conviction and action;  
and it is at this point that the rising gen-  
eration asserts its instinctive prerogative,  
by taking the flood to the success lost  
through the vacillation of its progenitor.  
And it was, therefore, the logical effect  
of the disparity in years, that Squire Rob-  
bins by causing an interval in the pre-  
cautionary measure of procuring a lamp  
from the mantel, between the ominous  
squeak and the opening of the door, nei-  
ther saw nor heard the light, scudding  
footsteps through the hall-way and up the  
stairs. And with the presumptuous tena-  
city of all fledglings, to hold and make  
the most of any discovered new power,  
Vixie's successful flight was held by her  
own intrepid self a legitimate capital, to  
be invested in the conceded right of self-  
preservation.

Taking her little, freckled face between  
her two brown hands, she slowly and sil-  
ently repeated to herself the dialogue that  
had taken place between her father and  
Deacon Morse, and almost audibly com-  
mented; "Well, two heads may be better  
than one, but I reckon they'll have a hard  
job in forcing me to give up George Keeler  
to marry Felix Morse!" And after a long  
spell of "good thinking," her woman's  
wit declared its proverbial potency, in her  
clapping her hands together and exclaim-  
ing—"Now for it, father! and if you and  
Deacon Morse don't have your hands full  
of trouble in this affair, my name isn't  
Vix!"

III.

It was Vixie's habit, to go, about dark,  
across the first and second meadow,  
through the old apple orchard and the  
chestnut strip, to the boulder meadow be-  
yond, to collect and drive home the cows  
down the lane that wound through the  
woods, skirting the north side of the til-  
led land. This from having been a duty  
of terror, to her younger days, had become  
a fascinating privilege. She loved to hear  
the glad exuberance of her voice echo and  
re-echo away among the old Housatonic  
hills; fancying her vocal spirits returned  
freighted with the weird potency of cavern,  
stream, and dell, to throw a glamour  
of enchantment over her solitary ramble.  
And as the cool mist arose from the humid  
soil, enveloping bush and tree and whis-  
pering brook; and the owl and whippoor-  
will hooted and called through the over-  
hanging branches, while ever and anon,  
the distant tinkling of cow-bells came  
with uncertain direction, her fairy land  
seemed complete. And had Oberon and  
Titania, with their myriad subjects, held  
court at some angle of the lane, to give  
audience to her enraptured self, she would  
have been sustained by the inspiration of  
the illusive scene, in making graceful and  
fitting reply to the royal compliments.  
But the night after her adventure, while  
on her customary errand, she was too  
much absorbed in her mundane plans of  
extrication from the very prosaic tolls  
the good Deacon and Squire were consen-  
taneously weaving about her, to abandon  
herself to the enchantment of the seductive  
elements—the weird macrocosm giving  
way to the intense microcosm of a woman's  
mind, bent on the subjugation of man's  
stupidity to her own good.

So when she suddenly came upon the  
laughing, expectant George, sitting com-  
fortably upon a huge log, a slight shock of  
surprise, followed by the exclamation:  
"You, George!" were sufficient to restore  
her.

And that rustic gallant, finding the little  
brown hand safe within his own, was  
about to deliver himself of his customary  
nonsense, when his mischievous glances  
were transformed, to a puzzled look, by  
the abrupt query:

"George, how much did you say old  
man Colburn wants for his saw-mill?"

"Fifteen hundred dollars; why, Vix?"

"I want you to buy it, right away,  
George!"

George gave a low incredulous whistle,  
then muttered, "If wishes were horses,  
beggars might ride!"

"Buy you'll buy it, George; I'll furnish  
the money! The bank account Aunt Jule  
left me will more than cover the price."

"Now, Vix," replied George, straighten-  
ing himself, with a proud intention of ob-  
serving the conventional code at all haz-  
ard, "this ain't my way of doin' business;  
and moreover it don't sound well. I don't  
like it, no how you can fix it, and won't  
consent to nothin' of the kind!"

"Then you'll consent to my marrying  
Felix Morse!" answered Vixie with a  
nonchalant air.

"Marryin' Felix Morse! What on 'arth  
do you mean, Vix?"

"I simply mean, that unless you do just  
as I am agoing to advise you, I'll have to  
marry Felix Morse as sure as fate!"

Poor George was so "clean gone" with  
fear and amazement, that he could but  
gapingly listen to Vixie's dramatic rehar-  
sal of the scene, between her father and  
Deacon Morse.

And when she finally reiterated her con-  
viction, that, "Our only hope, George, is  
in your buyin' the mill," the bewildered  
fellow hastily consulted, "to do anything,  
Vix, you think right and proper," adding  
after a parenthetical reflection of not hav-  
ing quite fully rounded his avowal, "for  
I'm so dreadful fond of you, Vix!"

To which Vixie made reply—in an ab-  
stracted tone that would have been tea-  
singly resented by George under less trying  
circumstances—"So you're told me several  
times before!"

George's honest, earnest devotion to  
Vixie bore down all conventional barriers  
in this awful emergency; and they two  
long and seriously canvassed its probabili-  
ties and possibilities.

"Now, Vix," exclaimed George after a  
long mutal pause, "what would you do  
with that old poke of a fellow, Felix  
Morse?"

Father says I would make him as good

a wife as any girl in the county," exasper-  
atingly replied Vixie.

"You wouldn't marry him nohow, would  
you Vix?" pleaded the now disconsolate  
George, a cold fear creeping through him,  
that if their plans should fail, Vixie's filial  
love might prove strong enough to bow  
her to a father's commands. And when  
she soberly replied: "It all depends,  
George, it all depends," he felt for the first  
time in his laughing careless life the know-  
ing of that canker worm—Anxiety.

But it was not in Vixie's nature to re-  
main long in low spirits herself, nor would  
she suffer any one else within the range of  
her gaiety to "nurse care" till it became a  
patient loved, and a few minutes after she  
and George were on their way home, as  
gay and happy as if their future had been  
assured. And as their voices died in the dis-  
tance, Felix Morse noiselessly parted the  
bushes behind the deserted log, and took  
an opposite direction, with a just percep-  
tible smile struggling over his thoughtful  
features.

IV.

There was something peculiarly aggra-  
vating to Felix in this being called an old  
poke, but much as he disliked the accusa-  
tion, he still more disliked the startling  
programme he had so unexpectantly be-  
come acquainted with. He was sufficient-  
ly honest to acknowledge to himself a  
yeen of meanness running through the  
sophism by which he had lulled his con-  
science throughout the interesting inter-  
view; and this self-questioning joined to  
the mollifying influence of Vixie's consid-  
erate treatment of his precious dignity,  
when his very name should have naturally  
caused her the greatest repugnance, had  
the effect of influencing him to, at least, not  
maliciously hostile action.

Perhaps a mysterious Sarah, on the far  
opposite side of the Housatonic, the Dea-  
con and Squire did not wot of, had claims,  
the prospective molestation of which,  
caused an alarm that too eagerly forced  
this magnanimity; tis certain, that Vixie,  
who had heard this fact whispered in a  
certain circle, with a woman's quick intu-  
ition, divined the true cause of Felix' at-  
tempt at ease when in her presence, and  
tacitly accepted him as a trusty ally.

Felix had been frequently invited to  
"tea," and the general attendance at  
church had been so managed, that he and  
Vixie found themselves walking home to-  
gether, quite as a matter of course.

Marm Morse wondered audibly at the in-  
creasing intimacy, at which the Deacon  
chuckled and winked in a vaguely know-  
ing manner, while Mother Robbins, though  
apparently smiling an approval, was really  
struggling to repress a sigh.

Yet Squire Robbins was troubled in  
mind. There were three facts daily be-  
coming more suspicious in their signifi-  
cance, to wit: the unaccountable squeak  
of the hall door, the abrupt cessation of  
George Keeler's visits, and the apparent  
interest Vixie so unaccountably took in  
Felix Morse's Company. Now, the Squire  
did not put these facts in juxtaposition  
and force them to suspicious attitude;  
but severally experienced an uncomfortable  
feeling whenever they obtruded them-  
selves upon his mind.

To such a positively demonstrative na-  
ture, it was absolutely necessary that the  
aggressive policy he had adopted, should be  
met by an active opposition, so that he  
might sternly dictate his will, and reluc-  
tantly enforce implicit obedience. He  
could not accept victory in the form of  
voluntary capitulation, but must have the  
thunder of artillery, and the struggle of  
the breach. He felt that he was actually  
of no need in the campaign he had ac-  
counted himself to direct. The forces  
were being maneuvered by some unseen  
power to the end he had forecast; and thus  
benefit of the distraction of active partici-  
pation, he found time and quiet to study  
the field and its combatants the more closely.

His only objection to George as pro-  
spective son-in-law was, that he had no  
"solid, stiddy habits, an' promised to  
allers be a good 'ruther nothin'!" but here,  
of a sudden, he was "workin' right an' day,  
an' actually doin' real handsome, as he  
told me with his own lips."

George had, in fact, frequently met the  
Squire, and, in a purely business man-  
ner, taken him into confidence, and acquainted  
him of his success and intended plans for  
the future, and enlisted his active sym-  
pathy, by requesting his opinion, which gave  
the reliable Squire an opportunity to ex-  
ercise his propensity for giving young men  
a little sound advice. And he felt the more  
committed to the welfare of his protégé, as  
George invariably acquiesced in every plan  
proposed, and happily so verified the  
Squire's shrewd convictions, that he enthu-  
siastically acknowledged to old man Col-  
burn, that, "George Keeler was the most  
promisin' young man in Babbitt's Centre  
after all!"

Vixie had so completely avoided any al-  
lusion to George, in the presence of her fa-  
ther, and so persistently evaded answering  
any remark he made, respecting George's  
success, and also treated Felix in a manner

so studied to her father's apparent wishes,  
that he, somehow, felt oppressed by her  
quiet anticipation of his unannounced pur-  
pose, and began to experience a longing to  
break the barrier between him and his  
daughter's heart and know how the case  
actually stood.

V.

It had been the Squire's custom for  
years, to assemble a large company of rela-  
tives and friends, to celebrate Thank-  
sgiving day. So one morning, at breakfast  
shortly after the Governor's proclamation,  
he expressed a desire to have general invi-  
tations sent out, "and," he remarked to  
Mother Robbins, "as Vixie knows pretty  
much all the folks we've been in the hat-  
it of havin' to Thankgivin' dinner, she  
may as well save us all the trouble, by see-  
in' that they be properly invited." Mo-  
ther Robbins assented, and then left the  
table to look after affairs in some distant  
part of the house, leaving father and  
daughter alone.

The morning was of that dreary, desolate  
character that sets so many of us to  
thinking, in a mood and light altogether  
foreign to one's normal habit; opening up  
views of latent desire, purpose and curi-  
osity, of which we have been but momen-  
tarily apprised, at some peculiar conjunction  
of personal circumstances.

The Squire was becoming lost in some  
such mood, there seemed to rise from out  
his sub-consciousness a hand, that insid-  
iously cancelled the self-sufficient theory he  
had so authoritatively propounded to the  
deferential Deacon; and as he looked  
deeper into his mysterious being, he saw  
that hand directed by his shadowy, former  
self—a generous impulsive nature, brook-  
ing no dictation, and finding arrogant re-  
futation of parental counsel, in the possi-  
bilities of his invincible manhood.

The carefully laid strata of his subse-  
quent years, was being contorted, and  
ever and anon, the tension of some too sev-  
erely tested part, would suffer a break, and  
the confined, better nature, would overflow  
the bleak forbidding surface. Rousing  
himself from this tormenting reverie, he  
turned a kindly eye on the pensive face  
of his daughter, and said, in a tone that  
caused Vixie's heart to start, and her eyes  
to scan his relaxed features.

"George hasn't made us a call in some  
time, has he Vix?"

"Yes, father, I believe he hasn't," re-  
plied Vixie, trying hard to convince her-  
self that a strictly liberal interpretation of  
her father's question, cast no unfavorable  
reflection, upon the frequent receptions of  
George, at the south-side gate, with their  
counselings and reassurances.

Somewhat nonplussed by the evident  
pain his question caused, the Squire fore-  
bore probing further in this direction, and  
assayed a new line of attack.

"Felix Morse strikes me as a remarkably  
stiddy, young man, Vixie."

"Yes, father, a prize for any girl," an-  
swered Vixie, in a tone of solemn envy.

"I've noticed him all along of late,"  
pursued the Squire, "an' it's my opinion,  
he has a good, sensible mind, and carries a  
clear head on his shoulders."

"I think Nelse very clever, if he does  
have some of his uncle's queer ways," art-  
fully replied the little imp.

"Eh! what's that, Vixie?"

"Oh nothing, father, only that I'm half  
a mind, at times, to tell him he's almost fit  
to keep his uncle company in the asylum,  
just to tease him, you know."

"You don't mean to tell me, that he  
gives signs of symptoms! do you, Vix?"  
exclaimed the now thoroughly alarmed  
father, in a hoarse whisper.

"Why how excited you are getting,  
father!"

"Vix!" he exclaimed, drawing nearer his  
chair, and his lips trembling with emotion,  
"My dear child—" but ere he could utter  
another word, a loud knock at the kitchen  
door, and the simultaneous entrance of  
Deacon Morse, to ask the loan of a wagon,  
put a stop to further dialogue.

The Squire felt his heart heavy, with  
this new and startling phase of the situa-  
tion. He stood aghast at the bare possi-  
bility of Felix having inherited the dread  
taint, and for the first time, acknowledged  
the striking physical resemblance of uncle  
and nephew. He forecast the future, with  
Vixie the unhappy wife of a mad-man!  
and as George's kind face thrust its re-  
proachful look into the scene, the old man  
groaned aloud.

Vixie, frightened at the effect on her  
father, was thankful enough for the timely  
interruption.

But a few days intervened to Thank-  
sgiving. Vixie managed through the har-  
ry of preparation, to evade any further  
clothing with her father. The circular  
pantry was crowded from bottom to top,  
with the vast product of a New England  
oven; the top shelf groaned with that  
crowning glory of Yankee cooking, pump-  
kin pie. And when the great day arrived,  
and with it, the folks, little and big, old  
and young, the table was spread, and the  
company sat down to meat. Next to the  
bland Deacon, sat the mysterious Sarah;

while the chair, at the left of the Squire,  
was filled by the spruce figure of George.  
The snowy head of the aged parson slow-  
ly rose above the level of the goodly as-  
semblage, and tremblingly asked a blessing  
on the bounteous repast. And soon, the  
round turkeys were being stripped of  
toothsome wing and leg, and hilarity  
reigned supreme.

Sarah completely captivated the Deacon,  
with her pretty attentions, and George the  
more completely ingratiated himself into  
the good graces of the Squire, by his very  
exemplary conduct and remarks. After  
the most voracious had cried enough, and  
the last cup of tea had been sipped by the  
portly dames, the parson once more arose,  
and announced, with a beaming counte-  
nance, "The company will now please pass  
into the parlor to witness the union, in  
the holy bonds of matrimony, of George  
Keeler and Vixie Robinson, and of Felix  
Morse and Sarah Pierce."

Quick as flash, all of the suspicious  
circumstances of the past few months, for-  
mulated themselves in the mind of the  
thunderstruck Squire, and he indignantly  
rose, in all his grand proportions, to pro-  
test. But the hand of the respected Par-  
son was laid upon his shoulder, and the  
Deacon looking hard, but kindly, at the  
blushing Sarah, exclaimed, "Haden't we  
better give it up for a bad job, Squire?"  
to which was supplemented the good-  
natured reminder of old man Colburn,  
"Come Squire, 'twont do to deal too hard  
with George; remember, he's the most  
promisin' young man in the Centre!"

The Squire looked helplessly around for  
a moment, and then sank into his chair  
without a word. The score of girls almost  
wild with the glorious surprise, soon had  
everything and everybody in position; and  
the parson having invoked the Divine  
guidance of the happy couples, led Vixie  
to her vanquished father, and blessed the  
kiss of forgiveness imprinted upon her  
brow.

Items of Interest

Where to go when short of money—go  
to work.

The King of the Sandwich Islands has  
left home to visit the United States.

John Smith has found relief among the  
Russians. His name is Jonoff Smitow-  
ski.

Henry Clay described a mule as "an  
animal that has no pride of ancestry and  
no hope of posterity."

A Western paper announces the death of  
a lady, celebrated for the "purity of char-  
acter and complexion."

Judge Bedle, just elected Governor of  
the State of New Jersey, is a member of  
the first Presbyterian Church, Jersey City,  
of which Dr. Imbrie is pastor.